

Provo quivers in shadow of brimming Deer Creek

By Kris Radish

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PROVO — Deer Creek Reservoir is nearly full, and Mayor Jim Ferguson says his crews have done all they can to prepare for the water that is spilling over the dam and into the Provo River.

"All we can do now is wait and see how much water will come down with this hot weather," Ferguson said Wednesday. "We have done everything that we can."

River Water Users Association to release water earlier from the dam's spillway were futile, and now Provo is simply in a wait-and-see position.

The association controls the water that leaves the reservoir, and Ferguson had been working with association representatives to get water released earlier so flows would keep damage along the Provo River to a minimum.

Ferguson said the association was worried that the reservoir wouldn't fill, and that is

why water wasn't being released in larger flows.

"Right now we have no complaints because the reservoir, as of 6 a.m. Wednesday, is nearly full and water is coming out," said Ferguson. "We just think water could have been coming out sooner and faster."

Ferguson said he knows private groups along the Provo are thinking about possible lawsuits against the association because of damage from the sudden release of water and the damage that follows.

"As a city we haven't made a decision on that yet," he said. "The potential for damage, however, is pretty high."

Ferguson said the city has done all it can now to build up the banks of the river and dredge it in anticipation of a high water release by the association when the reservoir is filled sometime in the next two days.

"It's simply touch and go now because the weather has been so warm we should have some pretty high runoff in the next two days. The reservoir will be full then and water will be coming out faster," he said.

He said the association could have bought more time for groups down the river by releasing water sooner from the reservoir.

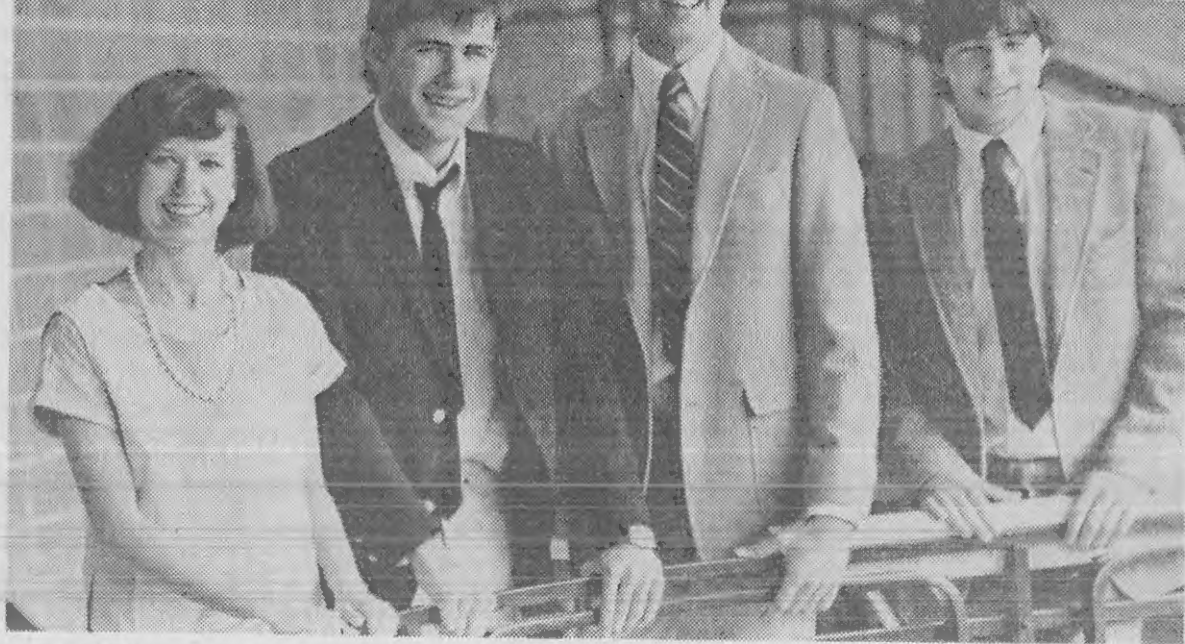
"We can handle about 1,800 cfs (cubic feet per second) of water, but once it gets over that, we have trouble keeping the water in its banks," Ferguson said. "When the reservoir is full the association has to release the water, and that is when the damage occurs."

History reminds students of people who bowed their heads, turned away and let their dreams die, said Danielewsky, one of the speakers at Provo's commencement. But history also brings memories of heroes — women struggling to keep families together, men fighting wars or expanding horizons in space.

"Whether we plow fields, sail across the sea to defend our nation or build families, we will become the heroes of tomorrow," he said. "There is hope in education, but there is no place for cowards."

Another speaker, Gary Cragun Watts, said a high school education may have been like surfing, then tumbling into the water, hitting the beach and not understanding exactly what happened.

"But we do understand what it was like as freshmen, walking in packs down the hall and losing a girl



Principal speakers at Provo High School commencement Wednesday night.